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LWVJC | P. O. Box 5452
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The Voter is issued the last Friday of the month to provide members advance notice of activities. The March Voter deadline is February 21.

FEBRUARY 2026

Do What You Can Do

There is so much going on right now. Whether at the national or state level, it can be overwhelming to figure out how to respond to effect change. And with the torrent of issues coming at you, not to mention just day-to-day living, it can be easy to get paralyzed into inaction.

Because we are part of a large League – here in Johnson County, across the state, and across the country – everyone does have to do everything, and we can still be effective in having our voices heard. I would challenge you to focus on taking what action you can in the one or two things that you are passionate about. Our League can help. You might choose to receive our advocacy alerts and contact your legislators on League priorities when new legislation is considered at the Capitol. You might want to ask questions directly to our state legislators at our legislative forums or at Lobby Day. You might want to help educate and register voters at a voter registration event, to help ensure everyone who is eligible can cast a vote. You might want to learn more about an issue by attending an Education lecture or a Making Connections event. Perhaps you follow our League and the US League on Facebook and see an issue that prompts you to contact your state or national representatives. You might attend a book club meeting and find yourself in a discussion Germane to current events. Or perhaps you can just make that donation that allows us to do our work.

Do what you can do. It is all important to our mission to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy.

I encourage you to continue reading through this issue of the Voter, to see what we have been doing as a League and what is planned. With the Iowa Legislature in session, we have begun our legislative forums and our Advocacy team is keeping us informed on legislation affecting our League priorities. We also have a Making Connections event in February – an opportunity to learn and to get to know your fellow League members. The LWV of Iowa will hold Lobby Day at the State Capitol on February 26. The Voter Registration committee is busy planning events and the Book Club meets via Zoom this month just in case the weather is uncooperative.

I look forward to seeing many of you at one of our events this month. Thank you for your dedication To Empower Voters and Defend Democracy!

Vicki Aden
LWVJC President



MEMBERSHIP

Membership and New Members

We currently have 166 members. I would like to welcome our League's newest member Dirk Keller. Please reach out and welcome him into our League as you meet them at various League events throughout the coming year.

Casual Coffee

All members are always invited to attend the League's Casual Coffees on the second Wednesday of each month. It's a good way to get to enjoy a beverage and get to know other League members. Members meet at 10 a.m. at Poindexter's Coffee in the Graduate Hotel.

Membership Renewal Reminder

This is a reminder to all members that your renewal month is the month in which you joined! Therefore, for any member who joined in January or February of 2025, please renew as soon as possible. All members should be receiving renewal reminders of *Renew Your League of Women Voters Membership*. For those whose membership has lapsed, you should be receiving renewal reminders from our League's membership email:

lwjcmembership@gmail.com. If anyone ever has a question about their membership, please contact me at lwjcmembership@gmail.com.

How to Renew and Pay Dues

- Renewing can be online by going to our Leagues' website
<https://my.lwv.org/iowa/johnson-county>. Under "Get Involved" click the "Join or

Renew" link then click the "Fill out online membership form here" link. If renewing with a credit or debit card you will see 3 separate dues charges, one each for national, state, and local dues payments.

- Members can also renew online with a check by ACH (an electronic payment using the numbers on the bottom of a check). This method lowers fees for the League so more of your dues go directly to funding League work.
- If you send your dues renewal check to our League's PO Box, PO Box 5452, Coralville, IA 52241, **please make the check out to either the LWVUS or LWV. Do not** make the check out to LWV Johnson County.

Thanks –

*Diane Duncan-Goldsmith
Membership Chair*



We had a good conversation around *Murder the Truth* and now we move on to our next book in February. We will discuss *Why Nations Fail* by Daron Acemoglu. Maureen Braddock will lead our discussion. We will meet on Zoom on Monday, February 16 at 5:30. The Zoom link will come out closer to the date.

The next book planned is *Jesus and John Wayne* by Kristen Kobes du Mez on March 23 (4th Monday due to spring break):

Contact Jeanne Bancroft (email below) if you want to be added to the book club email list and receive the Zoom link.

All are welcome!

Deanne Mirr (dmirr@me.com)
Jeanne Bancroft (jnn.bancroft@gmail.com)



EDUCATION

Child Care: Iowa's Patchwork Approach

Access to affordable and reliable child care is more than a parental concern. It helps keep the workforce humming, strengthens childhood learning and well being, and reflects a caring community. On March 10, the League of Women Voters of Johnson County will present "Child Care: Iowa's Patchwork Approach" at the Iowa City Public Library from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Speakers Jana Garrels, Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County; Alison Bettine, 4Cs of Johnson County; and Laurie Nash, Johnson County Social Services will enlighten us on current efforts to address the childcare crisis in Johnson County. This program will challenge us to think about the possibility of following the lead of New Mexico, which as of November 1, 2025, guarantees no-cost universal childcare to all its residents.

*Rebecca Conard and Susan Enzle, co-chairs
Maggie Elliot, Kathleen Kamerick,
Donna Hirst, Audrey Moeller*

Lawler did not attend. The elected officials started off with their updatges on the initial week of the legislative session and some of their priorities.

The focus topic for this forum was education. Representatives from various educational organizations came with questions. Questions were also posed from the general public in attendance.

The legislators urged all of us to follow the bills being introduced on the Legislative web page and participate in the subcommittee work on the bills. You can track the bills and schedules on the website:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>. The League's Advocacy Committee is also an excellent source of information on the bills being considered. They also send out Action Steps to members.

The next legislatove forum is scheduled for Saturday, February 28 at 9:30 a.m. at the Coralville City Hall. The topic will be Water Quality/Environment. Please plan to join us. It's a great opportunity to interact with our local legislators.

*Jeanne Bancroft
Voter Services Chair*



The first LWVJC Legislative Forum of the 2026 session was held on Saturday, January 24 at the Iowa City Senior Center. In spite of the frigid temperatures, there were about 30 hearty souls who attended in person. There were also around 17 people following on Facebook. Senators Zach Wahls and Janice Weiner as well as Representatives Adam Zabner, David Jacoby, Amy Nielsen and Elinor Levin participated. Senator Dawn Driscoll and Representatives Heather Hora and Judd

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Please mark your calendars for Wednesday, February 25th, at 2:30 to attend our Making Connections meeting at the home of Donna Hirst, 810 N. Linn Street, Iowa City. The program will be presented by Jessica Andino on Affordable Housing in Johnson County. Jessica is a League member and the Executive Director of Johnson County Affordable Housing Coalition. There will be time to ask questions of Jessica and get to know other League members. We appreciate Donna's willingness to host in her home. The meeting will conclude by 4:30.

*Jeanne Bancroft, Chair
Gaylen Wobeter, Joan Cook, Roxanne Hughes, and Paula Sanan*

VOTER REGISTRATION

The Voter Registration Committee is preparing for a busy election season. The primary elections are June 2 and the general elections are November 3, both this year. We are partnering with Red Wine and Blue for our first registration event on March 14 at the North Liberty Optimist Club. We intend to spend March, April and May registering people before the primaries, particularly focusing on venues, such as senior living residencies, that need assistance with absentee ballot request forms.

February 4 from 3 – 4 p.m. is the first meeting (via Zoom) of the five (5) member VR sub-committee. The major purpose of this meeting is to review previous registration locations, identify additional locations, and to discuss the logistics of holding multiple events in one day or week.

If any LWVJC member would like to join the sub committee, please contact me at mkathyclark@gmail.com.

*Kathy Clark
Chair*

FUNDRAISING

The Fundraising Committee kicked off the formal 2025/26 Campaign November 1 with a letter mailed to each member. The goal for this campaign is \$9000 and a secondary effort is aimed at increasing the numbers of members participating above the 20 percent experienced in the last few years.

As of December 31, a total of \$6125 has been received: Operations, \$3975, and \$2150 for Education. This is approximately 68 percent of our \$9000 goal; 45 members have contributed at approximately a 27 percent rate of our current membership count of 166. Donation cards will be available upon request at all League activities and donations can also be made online at <https://my.lwv.org/iowa/johnson-county/donate>. Thanks to all of you who have donated to our efforts, both operational/administrative support and in support of our tax deductible Education Fund.

The League nonpartisan goal is to provide information to our voters that will help them make informed choices and decisions regarding

who they vote for. We even have leadership and members in our chapter devoted to Voter Registration, Voter Services, Advocacy, and Education who are engaged to provide members and the general public with information consistent with our priorities. This year, there is so much work to do because OUR VOTES COUNT! And your financial contributions to our administrative, operational and education expenses help us provide the services that the League through our national, state and local organizations we have been doing for over 100 years.

There are only a few more weeks left for you to donate. If you have not yet donated, please help us meet our increased goal. If you have made a donation, thank you for your support. If you did donate and can, will you give a bit more? I will because I believe EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

Bea Hicks
Fundraising Chair



LWV LOBBY DAY

The League of Women Voters of Iowa will have a Lobby Day at the State Capitol on Thursday, February 26. This is a great opportunity to talk to our legislators in person and advocate for League priorities and related pending legislation. It is also a great opportunity to sit in on a committee meeting or watch the legislative activity in the chambers.

We will have carpools from Iowa City leaving at ~7:30 to 8:00 a.m. We will start at the Capitol at 9:30 – 10:00 and will meet at the LWV table in the Rotunda area. We will ask our county legislators to visit us there, or go to meet them outside the House and Senate chambers. We usually finish around 2:00 or so, to be back in Iowa City by 5:00 p.m. at the latest.

If you are interested in attending Lobby Day, please email jclwvoters@gmail.com. Please include if you would like to ride in a carpool or if you are able to drive a carpool. More information will be available to attendees as we get closer to the event.

Vicki Aden



ADVOCACY

The goal of the LWVJC Advocacy Committee is to Inform, Empower and Advocate.

The Iowa Legislature is back in session and moving quickly with their agenda. An informed electorate demanding transparency and responsive government is crucial to protecting our democracy. Over the past two weeks, the LWVJC Advocacy Committee has posted Advocacy Action Alerts on the following legislation:

- The EPA's proposed redefinition of protected waters
- Iowa's Bottle Bill review Iowa Code Chapter 455C
- The closing of the Iowa City Historical Society facility
- SJR11 Amendment restricting Iowa tax increases
- A vote on the standalone DHS bill to continue pushing for ICE reforms while ensuring continued funding for essential government agencies.

To Inform

Join the LWVJC Advocacy Team to receive e-mail *Advocacy Action Alerts*. Advocacy Team members work collaboratively, support one another, and play a critical role in advancing the League's mission to protect and strengthen democracy.

Click here to receive
Advocacy Action
Alerts

Your voice, perspective, and energy are needed more than ever. Join us in turning knowledge into action and ensuring League positions are heard at the Statehouse and beyond.

To Empower

Contacting your legislators is one of the most effective ways to influence public policy at the local and state level. When elected officials hear directly from informed constituents, it reinforces accountability and ensures community priorities are considered in legislative decisions.

Your voice -- especially when joined with others through the League of Women Voters of Johnson County--can shape outcomes before votes are cast.

This *Letter Writing Tool Kit* generously shared by 100 Grannies, Iowa City, will provide tips to best writing practices, sample advocacy letters, links to contact elected officials and local media outlets--all you need to be empowered to share your voice.

Advocacy
Writing
Toolkit

LWVJC Member Deb Gallagher

To Advocate

We urge all citizens to share their questions, thoughts and concerns with their elected officials. And it's never been easier to share your voice!

Use the streamlined app: <https://5calls.org/>

Tracking Iowa
Legislation
Link

Tutorial Video:
How to Track Iowa
Legislation
LWVJC Member Shannon
Patrick

*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

★ ★ ★ JOIN US FOR THE FEBRUARY LEGISLATIVE FORUM ★ ★ ★



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2026

9:30 - 11:30 AM

**FOCUS ON WATER QUALITY &
THE ENVIRONMENT**

Coralville City Council Chambers
1512 7th St, Coralville

In-person and live streamed to LWVJC Facebook page

League of Women Voters of Johnson County

Casual Coffee

Wednesday, Feb 11, 10 a.m.

*Poindexter Coffee
The Graduate Hotel
210 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City*

**JOIN LEAGUE MEMBERS FOR A
RELAXED COFFEE AND CONVERSATION**



Deborah Turner Book Group

Please join us!
February 16, 2026
5:30-6:30 PM
via Zoom
Contact Jeanne Bancroft
for the Zoom Link (jnn.bancroft@gmail.com)



Book
Why Nations Fail
Daron Acemoglu



Making Connections

**Affordable Housing in
Johnson County
Jessica Andino, Executive Director**

FEBRUARY 25, 2026, 2:30PM
810 N LINN ST
IOWA CITY
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS



FUNDRAISING FOR IMPACT

**EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**

**DONATE
LOCAL**



ADVOCACY

The Advocacy Committee informs, empowers
and activates our League members
In support of our LWVIA Priorities

★ VOTING

Promote equal access to voting and ensure all votes are counted. Adopt automatic voter registration. Pass a constitutional amendment allowing Iowans with felony convictions to vote after time served. Promote open primary elections. Join the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

TRANSPARENCY & CITIZENSHIP

Demand government accountability and transparency by requiring all amendments and bills discussed in committee to be available to the public prior to a vote. Demand timely processing of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Encourage direct citizen participation by requiring virtual committees and subcommittees.

EDUCATION

Provide oversight and track public funds being used for non-public schools. Require any non-public school receiving public funds to meet the same standards as public schools. Fully fund public schools. Continue to expand access to affordable childcare. Restore statewide special education and disability services.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Guarantee access to the full range of women's reproductive health services. Repeal the six-week abortion ban. Make contraception available without prescription and promote programs that help prevent unplanned pregnancies. Ensure Medicaid services are comprehensive and accessible. Set policies that attract maternal health professionals and address the state's OB/GYN deserts.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Increase state funding for victim services; develop strategies to prevent human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault; and enact "Safe Harbor" legislation to protect victims from criminal prosecution.

WATER

Prioritizing, protecting and improving Iowa water quality and ensuring its sustainable management. Enact policies that safeguard clean water and address challenges of health risks, pollution, overuse and climate change.

GUN SAFETY

Ban assault rifles and military-grade weapons for civilian use. Enact background checks on all gun sales, close gun show loopholes, require gun safety locks, repeal Iowa's "stand your ground" law, and oppose laws that allow carrying guns on school grounds.



League of Women Voters of Johnson County

OUR MISSION: *Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.*

OUR VISION: We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

OUR VALUE: We believe in the power of women and men to create a more perfect democracy.

Photo Gallery



A photo from January's Making Connections gathering with speaker Emily Kriegl talking About the Coralville Library programs to help adults learn English



January 24th Legislative Forum Panel featuring Senator Wahls, Senator Weiner, and Representatives Jacoby, Nielsen, Levin and Zabner. The Moderator was Roxanne Hughes, LWVJC member

Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Monday, February 9	7 p.m.	Zoom	LWVJC Monthly Board Meeting
Wednesday, February 11	10:00 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee at the Graduate Hotel, 210 S Dubuque St, Iowa City	Monthly Casual Coffee
Monday, February 16	5:30 p.m.	Zoom	Deborah Turner Book Club
Wednesday, February 25	2:30 – 4:30 p.m	Donna Hirst's Home, Contact jclwvoters@gmail.com for the address	Making Connections
Thursday, February 26	All Day	Iowa State Capitol DesMoines	LWV Lobby Day
Saturday, February 28	9:30 a.m.	Coralville City Council Chambers, 1512 7 th Street, Coralville	Legislative Forum - Focus on Water Quality & the Environment